

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 761  
By Shepard

A RESOLUTION to recognize the many contributions of Larry Pendergrass on the occasion of the observance of the bicentennial celebration of the founding of Dickson County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are particularly pleased to celebrate historic milestones in the histories of the counties of this state and to specially recognize the significant contributions of leading citizens of such counties and their communities to their growth and development; and

WHEREAS, one such progressive community is Dickson County, which has been lately celebrating its bicentennial, and one such outstanding citizen is the late Larry Pendergrass, who was a prominent leader of Dickson County's African-American community during the tumultuous civil rights era that led to successful integration of the county's school system; and

WHEREAS, the son of Aquillia and Era Jackson Pendergrass, Mr. Larry Pendergrass married Beatrice Polk of Charlotte on June 30, 1941; he was the father of Wanda and the grandfather of Aaron and Anthony Grissom; and

WHEREAS, a 1937 graduate of Hampton High School, Mr. Pendergrass earned a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Master of Arts Degree in Education from Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, on October 10, 1942, Larry Pendergrass entered the United States Army and courageously fought to protect his country in the D-Day Invasion at Normandy. Mr. Pendergrass was discharged from the Army as a Staff Sergeant on November 5, 1945; for the bravery and valor he displayed throughout his service in the military, Larry Pendergrass received the Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star, and American Theater Ribbon; and

WHEREAS, upon his return from the war, Mr. Pendergrass became a history teacher at Hampton High School for a number of years, before being promoted to the position of principal



in 1954, the same year the United States Supreme Court mandated the desegregation of all public schools in America; and

WHEREAS, in 1963, the movement for desegregation hit Dickson County in the form of sit-ins, and Larry Pendergrass, an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and a respected community leader, allowed his students to participate in sit-ins throughout the county, against the will of the Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the determination, patience, and will exemplified by Mr. Pendergrass and his students prevailed successfully to foster a series of discussions and negotiations, which eventually resulted in the agreement to integrate local businesses, restaurants, sporting events, and schools; and

WHEREAS, following integration, Larry Pendergrass became a health teacher at Charlotte High School and was later promoted to the position of Attendance Supervisor for the Board of Education, a position he held until his retirement in 1980; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Pendergrass dedicated his life to serving his community, county, and country, working within the African-American community and the larger county of Dickson to assure good jobs for African-Americans and serving on the Dickson Housing Authority Board; and

WHEREAS, a highly esteemed civil rights leader, Larry Pendergrass passionately fought for the rights of freedom and equality promised to all citizens of America, and this General Assembly finds it appropriate to recognize his significant contributions to his community, state, and country; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join with the citizens of Dickson County in celebrating their bicentennial and in specially honoring the many laudable contributions of Mr. Larry Pendergrass to the growth and prosperity of Dickson County and to the admirable quality of life enjoyed by its citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to the family members of Mr. Pendergrass with this final clause omitted from such copy.